

In the very first chapter of *Rebby*

CARIBBEAN LITERATURE

(Oral & Written)

There is developing ^{today there is} in the Caribbean vital literary activity, a spontaneous impulse to produce, create and communicate

Our Caribbean ^{poetry} literature is now reflecting the realities of our life, creating our Heroes and Heroine s, speaking our own language presenting the authentic tragedy, drama and comedy of our own life-
style, treating our own emotional, social, and psychic problems and portraying our own unique way of life..... ^{Caribbean} writing now (in these times) has gained the momentum and vitality of the Caribbean people with a focus on the "Folk element" and that's my Field.....

The rich heritage of Oral Literature in our Folklore
[the wealth of traditional customs and rituals, songs stories, legends and proverbs, which are a direct expression of our African Heritage, form a vital, strong and unending source for our Written Literature. Though Asian and European Cultures have had ^{much} ~~some~~ influence on our Cultural development, the African Traditions remain the strongest element and the dominant feature.

It is this conviction which leads me to write

For wen de Asian Culture,

An de European Culture,

Buck up pon African Culture

In de Caribbean People.....

We stir dem up an blen dem to we flavour!

We shake dem up an move dem to we beat!

We weel dem an we tun dem,

An we rock dem an we soun' dem,

An we tempo dem,

An lawks de rydim sweet!

An de beat

Is de Caribbean rydim!

^{Rhythm}
This rydim moves with Authority through both the oral and written Literature of the Caribbean people.

There is developing in the Caribbean a literary activity.

..... a spontaneous impulse to produce, create and communicate
Our Caribbean literature is now reflecting the realities of our
life, creating our Heroes and Heroines, speaking our own language
presenting the authentic struggle, drama and comedy of our own life.
[applying] treating our own emotional, social, and psychic problems and
protesting our own unique way of life..... writing now (in these
times) has gained the momentum and vitality of the Caribbean people
with a focus on the "folk element" and thus my field.....

The rich heritage of Oral literature in our folklore.....
the wealth of traditional customs and rituals, songs, stories, legends
and proverbs, which are a true expression of our African heritage.
form a vital, strong and unending source for our literature.
Though Asian and European cultures have had some influence on our
Cultural development, the African Tradition remains the strongest
element and the dominant feature.

For men of African Culture.

As the European Culture.

Back up from African Culture

In the Caribbean people.....

We stir dem up an din dem to we favour!

We shake dem up an move dem to we best!

We weel dem an we tun dem.

An we look dem an we some, dem.

An we tempo dem.

An lawks de tydin sweet!

An de best.....

Is de Caribbean rhythm!

This rhythm moves with Authority through both the oral and

written literature of the Caribbean people.

① In the Caribbean literature, it does not only exist
in books in fact the majority of poetry is spoken or sung
DINKY * MINI Set up, wake
Gerre.

"Dinky-Mini," the function held for eight nights after a death
to cheer up bereaved relatives, has been going on in Jamaica since the
days of slavery, when a death in the family presented one of the few
occasion on which slaves were allowed to have any Communal gathering.
At this time they took full advantage of the opportunity to practice
an old tribal custom of banishing grief. No sadness is allowed at the
Dinky; gaiety and jollity prevail. People sing the loudest, laugh
the loudest and dance with exaggerated abandon. Many of our old
Jamaican folk games and Mento dance and songs, generate the mood of the
Dinky.

The "Mento" is the name given to all the old traditional Jamaican
Folk-music. The "Mento" band is usually made up of Banjo and Guitar and
a Mariaba-box which is patterned off the "African Thumb Piano" or "Sansa"
A "Mento" song like "Linstead Market" tells of a poor higer-woman who
took her ackees to the Market on a Saturday and up to late Saturday
night, had not made even one sale - "Not a quattle nut sell." This song
has a sad theme but it usually is sung and danced in a very gay mood,
expressing jollity rather than sorrow. This is the mood of the Dinky and
we find this mood reflected in much of our traditional customs and very
strong in the use of our dialect slang and proverbs. In the words of
an old Jamaican proverb, "we tek kin test' so kiber heart-bun" - (Smile
in the face of sorrow) - To strive for happiness is more desirable than
to grieve.

The nature of the Dinky makes it a sort of creative centre for
producing new folk-material. The demand for continuous gaiety stimulates
the imagination and sets the mood for displaying creative talent. Any
thing of interest which happen before or during the time of a Dinky
becomes a topic and inspiration for new activities. New words are made
up to old tunes, old songs are set to new dance-patterns, stories and
proverbs are dramatized.

These words warmed my heart
and dissolved any doubt or reservations I might have
had about writing the Introduction to this book
*Manga saw two Bull Mamma

ANANCY STORY

The Anancy Story is a popular feature of the Dinky. Anancy is an Ashanti Spider-god who came with us from West Africa. He has magical powers and is able to change himself into whoever and whatever he wishes, at certain times. Anancy who is affectionately called "Bredda 'Nancy," is known as the trickify little spider-man who speaks with a lisp and lives by his wits. He is both comic and sinister, both hero and villain of the Jamaica folk stories. He points up human weaknesses and shows how easily we can be injured and destroyed by our own greed, stupidity, or over-confidence in the wrong people and things. Tackuma, a name which comes from the African Twi word meaning "Son of Anancy" is often used in the Anancy stories as the friend or victim of "Bredda 'Nancy." The Anancy story-teller, by accentuating the comedy in the speech, move ment and gesture of Anancy, rides the tale of an/ malicious meaning and fits it perfectly into the mood of the Dinky.

Not even religious rituals escape the creative mood of the Dinky. A ritual is dramatized in its true nature with all the seriousness it demands in movements, gestures and facial expressions. The most ridiculous words are substituted for the real words of a religious song. On lookers usually find this very amusing but the performers maintain the serious mood of the ritual throughout. The merriment of the onlookers merge with the apparent seriousness of the performers to preserve the basic mood of the Dinky - "tek kin teet' kibber heart bu'n." This I feel, is also the basic mood of the Jamaican character. We are aware of the pathos of a situation but are determined to ignore it, for "Laugh sweeter than cry."

There are occasions when a relative of the family of the dead person shows pent up grief and does not take part in the "Kin teet'" mood of the Dinky. The word then goes around that something has to be done to release their emotion. Say, in the case of a woman who has lost a child, you will hear, "We haffe mek her bawl." Then a ring play is started with a woman and a child in the centre, while the group sing with great pathos and deep feeling. "Bawl oman, bawl yuh pickney ded." This song is repeated over and over with growing intensity until the grieving woman screams. Immediately this happens, someone shouts, "Brucj it up, bruck it up" and a new song is introduced at a lively tempo.

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oral lit

GERRE

Gerre is another custom which has the same purpose and all the features of the Dinky except the musical instruments. At the Dinky, instrumental music is not necessary but at the "Gerre", drumming is a dominant feature and the drums must be used for dancing.

MYAL

The belief in Bush Medicine, the curative powers of plants and herbs, is very strong in the Caribbean.

In Jamaica the practice of Bush Medicine is called Myal, which comes from the African word "Ma ye", meaning sorcerer or wizard. The Myal-Healer male or female (Myalist) must master the knowledge of the curative powers of plants and must use this knowledge for good only. In this sense, the Myalist is the direct opposite of the obeahman who is best known for using "Duppy" (Spirits or ghosts) to do harm to others. Yet the Myalist must also have complete knowledge of the methods of the obeahman in order to counteract evil.

Shampong Nanny, the Maroon warrior-woman, was said to be a great Myalist. According to legend in the famous battle with the British at Accompong in 1738, when the Maroons were outnumbered at one point and it seemed as if victory would go to the British that day, Champong Nanny tore off her clothing, rubbed her body with a certain Myal-plant and stood on the brow of a hill inviting the soldiers to fire at her. The legend goes that the bullets bounced off her body back to those who fired them, wounding them. The British fled in terror from the scene and victory went to the Maroons..... but it is believed that because Nanny used her Myal powers to hurt people that day, she lost all her powers of Myalism.

It is very difficult to remain faithful to the principles of Myal because of the temptation to use its powers for personal gain or revenge. It is said that some Myal-Healers who lost their powers became obeahman.

Today the practice of Myal is almost dead in Jamaica but the belief in Bush Medicine and Bush Bath is as strong as ever. It is quite natural for a Jamaican to tell you

Bush Medicine

By Louise
Berett

Bit ter cirose can cure nearly everthing.
Chainy-root an Strong-back wi gi stamina
Daily-cupa Garlic-tea wi bring dung blood-pressure.
Ginny-grass and Lime leaf wi cure yuh fever.
Pepper-leaf and Castorile wi bruk yuh bwile dem.
Divi-divi gargle wi cure yuh sore troat..
Bat-aise an Sinckle bible cure yuh sore foot
Duppy-Cho-Cho wi wash weh bad-luck.
Susumba leaf, Susumba pill wi wash out yuh system.
Ginger-root an Mint-tea fe gas an flatulance.
Broom-weed and Periwinkle fe palpatation.
Love-bush tea fe mirasme baby.
Sexi-contract pull out cole (cold) outababy.
Sour-sap leaf good fe pain-a-joint.
Majo-bittas and Rice-bittas cure yuh billianness
Donkey-weed and Pull-me-coat fe pain-a-belly.
Man Peabba, oman Peabba, Ten-ten fall back
an lemon grass,
Mingie root, gully root, granny back bone
Dead man git up an Bitta Gumma (Chipan tree)
Coolie Bittas, Corrilla Bush an de ole compelance
weed
Sweet broom, ~~cow~~ tongue an granny cratch-cratch.
Duppy barzie an de goozoonz weed.

Guy and
Hunta Satam etc.

* Laughter

③ We read Tennyson & Shakespeare

& some West Indians poets were

But the drums never stopped beating

- calypso songs, mento bands, local quadrille

Lead to my writings "wen de Asian
x Dub Poets

Federal Festival.

political influence, Independence

Black militant groups

360

1080

the way that I was brought up with the guitars singing men's songs about the "sweetness" of our local dishes like an Pass, apan digger song golden comb which the river carved for her

I found this hard to believe. Bright from all of the diggers

and when I was a child I used to love to listen to ^{our} Jamaican Folk-Songs, Folk-Stories, Anancy Stories, legends, proverbs; listen to tales of ni-nights, dinky-minis, duppy-stories, rolling-calf, whopping-boy at Christmas time I used to love to watch the John Cunno dancers ... and oh, I was fascinated by the drums at nights coming from the hills ... the Pokomina drums, the Burro drums all the things Jamaican were very much alive and vibrant around and about me. We were excited by them but somehow sensed that they were not considered respectable ... they had no social status ... they were not the things to which one should aspire ... not the things that one should desire to learn about or indulge in. In fact, they were to be deplored and despised as coming from the off springs of slaves, people who were illiterate, uncultured and downright stupid ... had nothing uplifting to offer to the society ... had no history except that of slavery and savagery (barbarism) ^{but} we were not allowed to sing the songs in school, though we would sing them to each other in the schoolyard at recess time and found that all of us shared a common love for these songs and stories, things that were so much an indigenous part of ^{our country} Jamaica. We did not know the word indigenous but somehow we could feel it.

It did not make sense to me that everything concerning certain people was bad. Even as a child I never accepted this; I felt something was very wrong. ² [As I grew older I became more convinced that it was inconceivable that creative and artistic abilities which related to what I came to learn were styled as the "Under-privileged" those were with out value, were without beauty, were without grace your hair was bad, your COLOUR was bad, your speech was bad yet most of the people I knew and loved, people who were good and kind to me had bad hair and bad colour and talked bad. I knew that the hair and colour part were not true and soon came to be certain that the matter of talking bad, the language part was not bad either. I was convinced that this language was good; the majority of Jamaicans spoke it, all Jamaicans understood it and it was the most natural and vital means of expression in the Country. Because it is rich in wit and honour, some people would dismiss the Jamaican talk lightly as a language of laughter and tend to ignore the fact that a vast number of Jamaicans for whom this has been first language for over the last three hundred years, have lived and loved

children all over the world were in the same position

and suffered and rejoiced in the language, talking nothing else..... and these people have left us, a rich heritage of oral Literature and Creative work in songs, in stories, legends and proverbs and vibrant music of which we can be proud. I was proud of our heritage and felt that I would like to do whatever possible to allow others to come to share this pride ... I started to write in what was called the Jamaican-Dialect Language there were those who thought this was a very backward step.

- "Ban's ah Killin'" (218)
- "No lickle twang" (209)
- "Dry-foot bwoy" (205)
- "Gay Pares" (207)

We were encouraged to sing the songs of foreign countries, were taught, foreign folk-dances and were taught that these foreign things were infinitely better than things Jamaican ... on the whole, we should be ashamed of anything that had the flavour of Africa although there was no talk of race, infact there was not supposed to be any racism and our country was said to be free of "colour-prejudice." Yet, the general aspiration, the accepted trend was to try to be as white as possible.

- "Pass fe white" (212)
- "Back to Africa" (211)
- "White Pickney" (111)

"Chronic unemployment and bad conditions of work led to unrest all over the Island in 1938 ... the marches of protest were the clearest signs of the crisis. In this poem, the Black Worker comes into his own for a day and assumes authority and status over his traditional ruler, employer the word "Strike" was a new name to many of the Under-privileged Jamaicans and a number of the people who were in the "Strike March" were unemployed persons ... the norm in those days for the Under-privileged was to be out of work. MISS LOU'S VIEWS. "OUT OF WORKERS".....

Soon World-war II broke out and Jamaica as a Colony of England became involved. Jamaicans condemned Hitler and were in sympathy with England and willing to go to war to support Britain, but many did not feel a personal involvement. "PERPLEX" as we recalled the digger songs on the way to school when we passed the street repair workers digging up the streets and singing

the diggers about digging up the street

hear the digger song in the street repair workers as they

Portraying what children the eye diggers dug a

these people have left u s, a rich heritage of oral Literature and Creative ~~expression~~ work in songs, in stories, legends and proverbs and vibrant music of which we can be proud. I was proud of our heritage and felt that I would like ~~to do what~~ ^{all}

LANGUAGE ~~over possible to teach others to come to share this pride.....~~

I started to write in what was called the Jamaican Dialect Language.

What is known as the Jamaican dialect or patois, is derived

mainly from the English and African influences to which the Jamaican people have been exposed over the last three hundred years. Most of the African slaves who were brought to Jamaica in the 17th century were Ashanti and Kromanti people from West African who spoke the Twi Language. Many of the Jamaican words in everyday usage are almost pure

Twi words.

Examples are

JAMAICAN WORD	MEANING	COMES FROM THE TWI WORD			MEANING
Kas-Kas	Mischief making (leading to a quarrel)	"	"	" Kasa-Kasa	Dispute or quarrel.
Nyam	To eat	"	"	" Nyam	Food or Meat
Nyamps	Feeble	"	"	" Nyams	Feeble
Bankra	Basket	"	"	" Bankara	Traveling basket
Asham	Pulverised corn with sugar	"	"	" Osiam	Parched ground corn
Katta	Used to cover crown of head for basket-carrying	"	"	" Kata	Covering, protection.
Fufu	Food boiled and pounded	"	"	" Pufuu	Yam or plantain boiled and pounded - biscuit.
Toto	Round cake	"	"	" Toto	Round ginger flavoured cake
Su-su	Gossip	"	"	" Su-suw	Utter a suspicion
Sey-sey	Gossip	"	"	" Sise	Talk a lot.

Then there are Jamaican words which some people consider entirely nonsense-words but again, these are practically pure African words.

Examples:- In Jamaica, "Chaka-chaka" used to mean disorderly - In Twi

"Chaka-chaka means scatter. "Nyaka-nyaka" meaning untidy or cut up-In

Twi Nyaka-nyaka means, cut into pieces. Jamaican "Buffo", meaning heavy

Twi, Bofoo, meaning, swollen, big, heavy. Jamaican Kra-kra, meaning

nervous - In Twi Kra-kra meaning restless. Jamaican "Chamba" signifying

cut up and Chamba, Nigerian, for disfigure. Jamaican "Napo", sleep, a

sleepy - Twi Nnopapo for sleep well. Jamaican "Massu" to lift up - Twi

Masu, to lift. Jamaican Butu for short - Twi Butu, to stoop.

OUTA WORKERS 1938

Listen noh Auntie Roachy sey she kyan fegat wat a great backative de outa-work people was to de workin' people demandin. ~~de~~ de 1938 up-stirrins of strikins an riot bruck outins an marchin an plain-talkin gains low wages and longula ^{da} workin hours fe workers. Yes bwoy, every strike was a strike-out fe both ^{workers an} outa-workers an de outa workers dem was pon spot ready defen' de worker dem cause. Lawks, Auntie Roachy sey she memba de firs' strike day wen a big gang a outa-work smady wid stick an halfa-brick was march up Orange Street an alhalla pon de top a dem voice "Lock up de shop an strike! Stop work fe pittance! Stop work fe fippance! Come outa de shop an strike! Stop Work! Look up!" One grocery man ketch him fraid an halla to ^{de} door man Muscle-mout sey "Lif' up de bag a flour an meck we lock up quick." But same time de gang a outa workers lan' a de shop door an de ring leader man halla "Omuch a week yuh get Muscle-mout?" As Muscle-mout open him mout fe go sey "five shillin!" de shopkeeper halla under him breat' "sey poun', sey poun' sey Poun'!" Muscle-mout ~~was~~ straighten up him mout an sey "One poun' a week" an fram dat day Muscle-mout start get twenty shillins a week. Him wages raise four times in one minute counta strike day outa-workers. Massi-me massa, dat was a day in 1938. Auntie Roachy sey dat she kyan fegat wen one a her lickle outa-work country cousin gal come home late an outa breat' pon de fus strike day night an her big sista who she wasa kotch wid a town so glad fe see de gal come home safe an soun' dat de sista get bex an halla:-

Gal wey yuh deh fram mawin aeh?

Dah march wid strike noh?

Da h strike fe pay wen yuh naw work?

Gal how yuh bare-face soh?

S'pose policeman did teck yuh up?

S'pose dem did shoot yuh dung?

Wus ting wen concho Country gal

Get climatize to tung!

An de gal trow dung herself wid her eye dem a glissen wid joy-fulness

an halla re-... Shet up yuh mout mah meck me talk,

How poor man reign tedeh,

How we lick big shot till dem beg

An shout an start fe pray

We tun all da dung tung man

An oman fram de store,

An soh till fe we tempa cool

Dem kyan go work noh more

We drive pon tram-car free of cos'

Dis like is fe we own,

An wen we tiad o' de drive,

We block de line wid stone,

Yuh want see bare-foot nayga man

Dah direck mota-car,

Dah fling him han' an stop wite man

Wen dem dah go too fas'

Yuh want fe se me an Maggy

Wid stick eena we han',

Dah orda servant gal fe strike

An dah captize dirt pan.

Soh me gwan bad jus' like de res'

An nevah fraid at all,

For small-fry wasa reign tedah,

An big-shot got a fall.

Ay Ya Yi.....

XE

Laughter is very important to the Jamaican, and in many cases the emphasis is placed on laughter and though the comedy contains the tragedy, it tends to over-power it. Take for instance, the drama and pathos and humour of the Street-vendor, who had to be on the constant watch for the policeman, because though this was her only means of livelihood, it was against the law. The next poem "South Parade Peddler" was written during the Second World War.

"South Parade Peddler" (27)

"Candy Lady" (28)

"Wen trouble teck"

"Uriah Preach" X

"Me Bredda"

"Cousin Joe" X

"Moon an Mango"

"Street Bwoy"

"Ped. Crossins"

"Colonisation"

"Home sickness" (35)

"Jamaica Oman" X

"PROVERBS"

"Mawga cow a tun Bull mumma"

"Every fish eena sea no shark"

"Every chain yuh hear a noh rollin' calf"

(Fear greater than reality)

"PRAISES"

"DUTTY TOUGH"

Gay Pance
Bangor Madam
Pass Je wife

Wine Newspaper

Write for Jamaica
Romeo
Roch.

Saliday

Julie.

me deh pan hars'

Xi Tayma chile

(Duffy Market)

* Two bunny parts
Rainbow

The Jamaican theatre is now reflecting
the realities of our life, creating our
heroes + heroines, speaking our own language
presenting the true Drama tragedy + comedy
of our own life - style, treating our own
social + emotional problems - portraying
our own unique way of life. The theatre
is now reflecting the vitality of the
with a strong focus on the folk element -

more.
Wealth of traditional customs, rituals,
songs, stories legends + proverbs which
form a strong + unending source for our
theatrical performances theatre.

Mento - Reggae:

"De rain a fall but de duty - line"
"Me go dah feel fe go weed me quang"

I man bawn yal - ~~Mama~~ me wa work
I remember when we - a peay reel oh
me yenny say London Teban
Nuh no weeny meh - no no sah

^{help fight the war}
We travelled to England to ^{find} work, to school
+ from our culture our traditions with us to mingle
with that of ^{the} our foreign

Although the accepted trend was white or
European the flavour of Africa was
ever present + often dominant.

Those who respect
the foreign
those who laughed at
pompousness

W. Channing

9

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2

"Gay Paree" (207) *Laurel with Louise*
 Homelessness, 30

Stake Day

(212) ✓ su ①

1991年5月 第5期 总第100期 (133)

38 Yrs. survival
H black
non-1000

Whiah Bread
Covered the
moon on mango
street Bway.
Red Cross

Candy Lady 28

Wen trouble tech

The Domestic

When children ^{we} were not encouraged to
sing folk songs,
Frankly was bad.

"Duty Tough"

„MITEO-DICKER“ (III)

(SJS) A 2500 (1)

He was successful in finding the source of isolated connections:

"Red House" (501)

"All-leaf road" (502)

"No Jackie street" (503)

"Ben, a up KITTIE" (518)

... and those people who are not yet
in the hands of the government ... I believe
to have been the cause of the ... I believe
of the ... I believe ... I believe ...
I believe ... I believe ... I believe ...
I believe ... I believe ... I believe ...
... and those people who are not yet

When I was a child I used to love to listen to Jamaican folk-songs, folk-stories, anancy stories, legends, proverbs; listen to tales stories of ni-nights, dinky-minis, duppy-stories, rolling-calf, whooppi ng-boy ... at Christmas time I used to love to watch the John Cunno dancers ... and oh, I was fascinated by the drums at nights coming from the hills ... the Pokinina drums, the Burro drums ... all the things Jamaican were very much alive and vibrant around and about me. We were ^{excited} ~~integrated~~ by them but somehow sensed that they were not considered respectable ... they had no social status ... they were not the things to which one should aspire ... not the things that one should desire to learn about or indulge in. In fact, they were to be deplored and despised as coming from the offsprings of slaves, people who were illiterate, uncultured and downright stupid ... had nothing uplifting to offer to the society ... had no history except that of slavery and savagery (barbarism) ... we were not allowed to sing the songs in School though we would sing them to each other in the schoolyard at recess time and found that all of us shared a common love for these songs and stories, things that were so much an indigenous part of Jamaica. We did not know the word indigenous but somehow we could feel it.

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... and these people have left us Jamaicans, a rich heritage of oral literature and creative work in songs, in stories, legends and proverbs and vibrant music of which we can be proud. I was proud of our heritage and felt that I would like to do whatever possible to allow others to come to share this pride ... I started to write in what was called the Jamaican-dialect ... there were those who thought this was a very backward step.

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"Pass fe white" (212)

"White pickney" (111)

[Laughter is very important to the Jamaican. In the words of an old Jamaican proverb "wi tek kin teet' kiba heart-bun", which means to take a smile to cover sorrow ... or ... it is more desirable to laugh than to cry ... or ... to strive for happiness is more desirable than to grieve. We find a great deal of this characteristic in the Jamaican and in many cases the emphasis is placed on laughter and though the comedy contains the tragedy, it tends to over-power it. ... Take for instance, the drama and pathos and humour of the Street-vendor, who had to be on the constant watch for the Policeman, because though this was her only means of livelihood, it was against the Law. The next poem "South Parade Peddler" was written during the Second World War.

Hand not scissors